

3

PLANNING FOR THE BETTERMENT OF RURAL EDUCATION //

County Agricultural Planning Committees are interested in the problems surrounding rural schools, for several reasons:

1. The increased burden of war taxes probably will cause farmers to wish to make savings wherever possible. Education represents a large proportion of the local general property tax dollar. A study of the local schools--particularly the small ones--may reveal several possibilities of reducing taxes without sacrificing quality of education.
2. As the war continues and the demand for nurses and for men and women to handle other wartime jobs grows, it may become increasingly difficult to obtain competent teachers.
3. If the war lasts long, price levels may rise. Teachers' salaries may also rise, which will further stretch the costs of operating small schools.
4. An Interim Committee is now drafting recommendations pertaining to schools to be presented to the next legislature. County Agricultural Planning Committees may perform valuable assistance by studying their local school problems and then developing recommendations which may be forwarded to the legislative Interim Committee.

General Background Information

It is important that a general picture of the present rural educational system be obtained and of what has been happening in the rural educational field in the last 16 years. The following data will be of great help in providing such a general picture.

1. Trend in rural school enrollment. This information may be obtained from the annual reports of the county superintendent of schools. The total rural school enrollment for the county for the years 1926, 1930, 1935, and 1940 may be used.
2. Trend in the number of rural schools open and the number closed. This information also may be obtained from the annual reports of the county superintendent.
3. Relation of size of rural school to cost of operation.
 - a. Cost of operation. The cost of operating rural independent schools may be computed by deducting the amount spent by the district for tuition from the total general fund expenditure (See Form 1). This information may be found in the county superintendent's annual

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Washington, D.C. 20250

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report. Use the most recent available. The cost of operating township schools may be determined by computing the total general fund expenditure for the township, then deducting the total tuition expenditure. The result may be divided by the number of township schools in operation to get the average for each school.

- b. The size of the rural independent schools may be ascertained by obtaining the average daily attendance figures from the annual report of the superintendent. It will be necessary to obtain the teachers' annual reports to get the average daily attendance figures for the township schools.
- c. The cost per pupil in average attendance is computed by dividing the total annual operating cost of the school by the average daily attendance. The data may then be classified in the following manner:

<u>Size of school in average daily attendance</u>	<u>Cost per pupil in average daily attendance</u>
5.0 or less	\$
5.1 to 10.0	
10.1 to 15.0	
15.1 to 20.0	
20.1 and over	

- d. Map of school enrollment. The trend in school enrollment and in size of schools may be effectively illustrated by mapping the respective size of the school enrollments, and the closed schools, showing their location on a county map, for the years 1925-26 and 1940-41. This data may be obtained from annual reports of the county superintendent. Various color symbols may be used for schools of the following sizes: under 7, 8 to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, 21 to 25, 26 and over. The enrollment of the schools and the closed schools for the fall of 1941 also may be mapped. These figures may be obtained from the first six weeks reports of the teachers. These reports usually have been summarized into a county summary by the county superintendent of schools, which is a convenient source to use, if available.

The value of background information is directly related to the extent that people in the communities study it. Such material might well be used at township Farm Bureau meetings, P.T.A. meetings, as well as used as a basis for newspaper articles.

Studies of Local Situations

It is necessary to get down to specific cases if immediate local benefits are to accrue. Local school districts have wide latitude of action which they may exercise. County Agricultural Planning Committees might well investigate their local rural school situation with a view to determining possibilities of reducing educational costs and improving educational opportunities. But in either case it is highly important that the rural schools in operation be located on a county map according to the size of their enrollment, as well as locating the closed schools. A suggested technique for this was described in the last paragraph of section 4 under General Background Information. Once the map is complete, it is possible to begin to talk about specific schools and situations. The lines of action open are twofold.

A. Investigate the possibilities for closing small rural schools and paying tuition and transportation to adjoining rural schools.

1. The first step is the location of the families with children in relation to surrounding schools. (Form GP 156 may be used)
2. Find the cost of tuition and transporting the pupils to surrounding schools. This is a matter which must be worked out locally. The tuition charged is a matter which must be worked out between the local school boards - the only restriction being that it may not exceed \$54 per year per pupil.

IMPORTANT - The basis for determining tuition for elementary pupils is listed in the discussion below. It is the same for tuition pupils going to rural schools as to town or consolidated schools. The law makes no mention of cost.

B. Investigate the possibilities for closing rural schools near town or consolidated schools and paying tuition and transportation to such schools.

In many cases additional revenue could be obtained by consolidated or independent school systems by taking in additional pupils at the elementary level and at the same time reduce the cost of education to the local rural district.

1. The procedure here is much the same as in A above. Again it is a matter of finding the cost of tuition and transportation.

IMPORTANT - Many county and town superintendents of schools have the erroneous opinion that school boards must charge as tuition for outside elementary pupils the actual per pupil costs in their system. THIS IS NOT TRUE. Section 4253.3, Ch. 213, 1939 Code of Iowa, provides only that the tuition charged for elementary pupils shall be mutually agreed upon by the respective boards, except

that it may not exceed \$54 per year. It makes no mention of cost as a basis for determining elementary tuition charges).

2. NOTE - Transportation costs in southern Iowa, where buses are used, usually run around \$36 per pupil per year - in northern Iowa about \$10 less. Where no buses are used, the cost is dependent upon the ability to reach local agreement. The county superintendent of schools can give information on the local cost of transportation.

Committee Action

Every County Agricultural Planning Committee, upon completion of its study, should make recommendation for action with respect to (1) the rural educational system of their county, and (2) necessary changes in state law which will assist the people in making the changes they believe advisable.

FORM 1

Computation of Per Pupil Cost of School Operation

1	2	3	4	5	6
School name	Average daily attendance	Total general fund expenditure	Tuition	Rural school expenditure (3 - 4)	Cost per pupil in av. daily att. (5 ÷ 2)
	:	:	:	:	:
	:	:	:	:	:
	:	:	:	:	:
	:	:	:	:	:
	:	:	:	:	:

FARM FAMILIES

School Districe # _____

Name of School _____

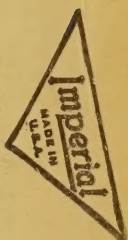
Township _____

Write name of each farmer beside the building site as John Jones

Mark as follows:If owner, ☒ ✓ John JonesIf tenant and
related to landlord, ☒ ✓ John JonesIf tenant and not
related to landlord, ☒ ✓ John JonesIf hired man, ☒ John Jones



Planning Agent Francis Kutish
leads a discussion on the rural school situation



Reorder No. 1012 $\frac{1}{2}$

SUPER BRAND FOLDER
HEAVY WEIGHT